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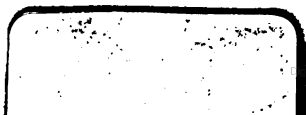
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LESSONS OF WISDOM

FOR THE YOUNG;

OR,

Spring Mornings and Evenings.

WITH TWELVE ENGRAVINGS.

BY THE REV. W. FLETCHER,

ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

From the creatures of God, let man learn wisdom ; and apply to
himself the instruction they give.

SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:

JOHN HARRIS,

CORNER OF ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD.

1831.



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Dorset Street, Fleet Street.

TO MY DEAR LITTLE DAUGHTERS,
MARY AND HARRIET,

THIS SMALL TOKEN OF
A FATHER'S LOVE AND AFFECTION

IS,

WITH EVERY ARDENT PRAYER AND FERVENT HOPE

FOR THEIR TEMPORAL AND ETERNAL

WELFARE,

DEDICATED AND INSCRIBED,

BY ITS AUTHOR.

*Woodbridge Grammar School,
4th August 1827.*

PREFACE.

IF any apology be needed for the publication of another elementary work for children, may I express a hope that it will be sufficiently made by its nature, novelty, and aim ; sparing me the necessity of advocating, at length, the propriety of placing such works alone in the hands of the young, as may leave no impression from their perusal, detrimental to truth, or the pure and elevating principles of Christian doctrine.

In the following pages, (as well as

in my other works,) I have endeavoured to be as amusing and instructive as possible, without sacrificing at the same time the culture of the soul, in my desire of rendering the path of knowledge pleasing and alluring. Little as I claim praise to myself in the accomplishment of my humble undertaking, still it will be a subject of much satisfaction to me, to find, in the patronage of the wise and good, that "*I have not laboured in vain,*" nor they "*spent their money for that which is not bread.*"

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LESSONS OF WISDOM.

CHAPTER I.

A WORD OF COUNSEL.

In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths.—PSALMS.

Now, my dear children, the winter being past and gone, and the weather so warm and open, we will again commence our walks; and, as I indulge a hope that you are willing to be taught and pleased at the same time, I shall attend your footsteps with pleasure. By so doing, I shall be able to protect you from

harm, shew you the most pleasing paths, and instruct and amuse you at the same time.

The world around us may be called the Book of Nature, in which God has written, in signs that may be read by all who will see, feel, and think for themselves, the power, wisdom, and goodness of HIMSELF. Not a tree grows without His aid ; not a flower blossoms without his favour ; and not a shower falls without his consent. All around us is full of Him ; all things, above and below us, speak only of the wonders of His name. The air we breathe, the earth we tread, the flowers we see and smell, the fruits we taste, and the joy we feel, all

come from Him ; all spring from one source, or fountain, and that is God, their Maker, our Father, and our Friend.

But we may walk the whole world through, and yet be no nearer to Him. We may wander in all parts, and yet not perceive Him. We may go here and there at random, through all His works, and yet learn nothing of Him : for in vain does he set his glories before us, if we will not look through and by them to *Him*, as the Grand Cause of their being.

That kind Friend, that good common Father, has not given us power to see and feel for nought. He wishes and invites us to partake of

all the good and pleasing things that He has sent us ; but He also expects that our hearts shall yield Him love and praise, as the only simple return we can make for such goodness and parent-like care.

Then, my children, in all your goings out and comings in, think of Him, speak of Him, and let His praise be on your lips all the days of your life : so shall your walks be truly pleasing to yourselves, and grateful to Him : so shall your words and thoughts of praise on earth be heard by Him, and written down in Heaven.

Little children, deign to look
On the world as in a book,
Where the Author's power and skill,
And the workings of His will,

Stand in letters all may read,
Proving whence they all proceed :
Thus, on Nature looking round,
You shall find, by sight and sound,
Goodness, greatness, mercy, shewn,
Which no other source can own,
Or creative parent call,
But the God and Lord of all.

CHAPTER II.

A MORNING WALK TO THE WOOD ; OR,
LESSONS OF WISDOM IN THE WORKS OF
CREATION.

The Lord by wisdom hath founded the earth ;—
therefore hear instruction and be wise, and refuse
it not.

Now, my children, the sun has
been up for some hours, and the
dew has left the grass ; we may
therefore safely take our morning
walk. Which way shall we go ?

Down to the trout-brook,—by the river side,—up to the Beacon Hill,—to the sea-shore,—or through that dear old lane of our's, which leads to the wood? You wish to go with me to the wood? Well, then, to the wood we will go: and now for our walk.

How soft and balmy the air is, this morning! How it steals along, as it were, laden with the sweet smell of the flowers!

The sky is without a cloud; the sun shines clear and bright; all nature is in its best array, or clothing, and seems to look on all sides happy in its simple yet pleasing beauty. The bees are very busy, flying from bud to blossom, sipping

their honey, and then humming along in the air, till they find a fresh knot of flowers for their morning repast. Look, in that smooth green field, at the lambs ; how happy and full of mirth they appear ! See ! there is one little merry fellow among them, running as if he were the boldest and swiftest of them all. Look at him ! He is now leaping over that narrow ditch ! Ah ! he has fallen into it ; see him scrambling out, up its dirty sides ! He looks rather *sheepish* after his fall. He does not appear to like his muddy coat ; and his young friends have left him to his shame. What a silly little fellow, to let his love of play and thoughtless mirth lead

him into such a state ! Now we enter our old narrow lane, with its branching trees, daisy-spread banks, and green velvet path. See ! there is the meek primrose, with its faint smell and pale yellow flowers. How modest it is ! It does not stare at us, like the gaudy scentless tulip ; but peeps out from the green hedge-row, as if it felt afraid to look abroad. And there is the cowslip, with its drooping flowers, simple and modest as the primrose itself. And here, in a snug corner, is our little purple queen of field flowers, which the poets, for shortness, call the vi'let, though spelt thus, vi-o-let. How she hides her little sweet-scented head amongst the leaves !

Like true virtue and real goodness, she is content to be found in a low estate, and seeks neither applause nor notice from the world.

We may thus, my dear little ones, learn lessons of wisdom from the simplest flower that God has made. Even the Son of God himself, the Saviour of Mankind, Christ, did not disdain to speak of them, in order that he might check the pride of man. He tells us, in His blessed Gospel, that the wisest and greatest of men, in all his glory, was not clothed like one of the simplest of the flowers of the field, the lily. Pride, my children, was never made for man: the fairest, wisest, and strongest man or woman in the

world has nothing to be proud of, since all we have we owe not to ourselves, but to God.

We may, in our blindness, boast of those things which in truth do not exist, since in the sight of God they are nothing. He looks at the heart, the conduct, and the souls, of His children; outward pomp and show are of no value in His view. The little daisy there, with its starry head, is more than equal in beauty to the fairest silken robe and golden chain ever made by man: *its* Author is divine, but *their's* is human. Can the work of man vie with God's?

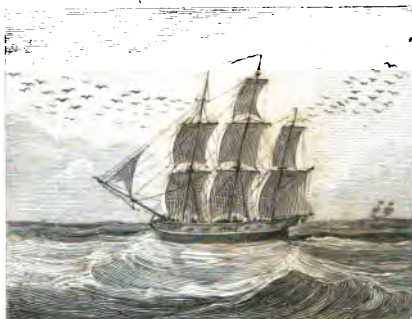
See! here is another lesson for human pride! A bird has this mo-





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ment flown out of this little bush, and I think its nest is in the branches. Yes; here it is, with two tiny eggs in it. Look at the beauty of their little home! how neatly it is made of its distinct parts, twigs, moss, weeds, hair, and wool! How rough and rude without, but how smooth and round and soft within! Could any man, clever and expert as he might be, form such a tiny and complete abode as this? Could any artist shape and make a nest like this?

Mark it well, within, without.

No tool had he that wrought, no knife to cut,

No nail to fix, no bodkin to insert,

No glue to join,—his little beak was all.

And yet how neatly finished!

Well now, my children, let us

leave it, that the poor bird may return to her nest: for it would be cruel in us to give her pain by standing near the nest too long; much more would it be cruel in us to take it, or its eggs, away, as naughty and wicked children would do.

Birds have feeling as well as we have; and the loss of their nests to them, is as much as our homes to us. To take away their young is also as painful to them for a time, I should think, as your loss, my dear little ones, would be to me, if any one were to come to my house, your home, and take you away to kill you, or starve, or stuff you to death with food you could neither swallow without pain, nor

digest to any profit. How you would cry for your nice home, your daily food, and your dear parents ! And think you not the little nestlings mourn, when they miss their warm nest, their wholesome and proper diet, and their poor parents, and chirp themselves to death ? Then, my children, never, on any account, be tempted to take or destroy that life which you cannot give, unless your own life be in danger from it : never rob a poor bird of its young, nor its nestlings of a parent and a home. God forbids the crime, your own reason condemns it, and a good child abhors it.

Well, at length, we have reached

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the wood; how full of mirth and beauty it is! The branches and sprays are all bursting out into full leaf, and the birds among them are as riotous and merry as if it were some grand gala-day in the wood. The rooks are cawing in the tops of the trees, and as busy building and stealing each other's nests as they can well be! Observe that black old fellow, on the top of that bough; how slyly he looks at the rook laying a twig in the nest below him. He is watching till he leaves the nest for more twigs, when he will stoop down from his own bough, and steal his neighbour's. There! the rook is gone, and the thievish old fellow looks

about him like one about to do wrong, and now that he thinks no eye is upon him, he steals the twig and puts it in his own nest.— What a wicked, shameless, and cunning creature it is! But he must mind what he is about; for I never knew good come of such crafty and base doings.

I once read of a rook, who was in the habit of stealing twigs for his nest from his neighbours'. Well, when he had stolen, as he thought, enough, and had made a nice nest for himself, the rooks, who had watched him for a long time, at once flew about him, plucked his feathers, flapped him well with their wings, took away his basely-gotten

nest, and drove him from the tree to seek refuge where his conduct was unknown—among strangers, if they would take him in.

From this example, learn the duty and common virtue of being honest. We may thrive for a time by lying and stealing, but the hand of God and man will one day meet with us; and it will be well for us if we do not then lose both body and soul, as the price of our misdeeds.

Now, my children, before we return, gather such flowers and rare plants as you may wish to know more of; and when we reach home I will attempt to explain their nature and uses to you. By so doing, you will improve your minds, and

refresh your bodies at the same time ; the former by knowing more of the handy works of God, the latter by using His good creatures to your health and comfort. So will your walk be not merely to a wood, but to that temple where God presides,—the temple of wisdom.

Wisdom is not to be found
'Mid the din of Pleasure's round,
Nor with riches to be bought,
Nor by subtle dogmas taught :
If the world possess thy heart,
Wisdom from thy side must part.
If thoud'st seek her, cleanse thy mind,
Be not to thy errors blind ;
Curb thy feelings, check desire,
Nor to lofty flights aspire,
Till thou first hast well survey'd
Wonders all around display'd,
Which, as steps, shall lead thee on
To the footstool of *His* throne,
Who abounds in wisdom, love,—
God, in whom we live and move.

CHAPTER III.

A MORNING WALK THROUGH THE MEADOWS ;
OR, LESSONS OF WISDOM, GLEANED IN THE
FIELDS OF NATURE.

As the morning is so very fine, and the air so mild and sweet, we will now walk to the meadows, where a little trout-stream runs winding about, like a thread of silver in the rays of the sun. We shall there find a nice nosegay of flowers for your good and dear mother, who, I dare say, will not be a little pleased, on your return, to receive such a token of love from her

dear children. Every little act of kindness from a child, is pleasing to a parent. Your mother will not look at the *value* of the gift; its greatest worth, in her view, will arise from the love she bears its givers, and the pleasure she will feel in finding her children mindful of her in her absence.

How merry the lark is, above our heads! See him, like a little dark speck, on the bosom of yonder white cloud. How high he is above all earthly things; how much raised above even the very people of the earth! But he does not lose his humble sense of himself by his lofty flight; although his place seems to be in the clouds of heaven, still he

builds his little nest, his downy home, among the clods of the earth. He sings above us, not to exult over us, but rather to teach us where *our* hearts should be, and whither our songs of praise should ascend like his. When the early morning rises, he rises also with praise on his wings ; and all the long spring, or summer day, he is busy either in tending his little ones, seeking his food, or filling heaven with his notes of joy. What a lesson for us, my children !

Well, here is our meadow, with its rich show of spring flowers. The daisy is spreading his little stars around, the primrose is peeping out from its grassy shades, the cowslip

is here and there bending its slender stem, with a load of rich flowers, and the dog-rose, with its simple blossoms, is growing on that thymy bank, where woodbines are trailing about their green branches. The grass is now putting forth strong stems, and giving a promise to the mower of heavy swarths, and full ridges of hay. What thousands of sweet smells are in the air! The showers of last night have filled the earth with greenness, sweetness, and life.

Ah! there is our old friend the cuckoo, or cuckow, with his soft and mellow voice. He cannot boast much of his music, for he has but two notes; yet they are so sweet,

and so full of spring feelings and thoughts of youth, that the lover of nature finds more to admire in them than in the finest strains of other birds, or the sweetest songs of any among men.

The cuckoo is a bird of very strange habits; it appears to live only by picking and stealing. If it can find a bird's nest well stored with eggs, it does not stay to think whether it is right or not, but at once (graceless creature!) makes its repast by sucking the eggs of its feathered fellow-songster. Nor does it take any trouble to make itself a nest; it is quite as easy in that respect, as it is about its meat. It makes itself quite at home in the

first nest it can find, by leaving an egg or two of its own among strangers, and its young to shift for themselves. And the young cuckoo, when hatched, is quite as devoid of feeling as its shameless parent. As soon as it gets strong, it begins to use its fellow-nestlings in a very rude way, by eating their food, and then pushing them out of their warm nest, to fall upon the ground and die. But, with all its faults, we like the cuckoo, and feel glad when we hear it; first, because we seldom or never see it, for it is very shy, as most are who do wrong; and next, because it is the herald and constant telltale of spring. It is a bird of passage, as many others

are ; that is, it only dwells with us in that part of the year that suits it best. When it does not like our weather, from its being too hot, or too cold, it migrates from us, or seeks some part of the world it likes better.

The swallow also does the same ; and you may see them, in the autumn, in flocks, trying their strength and getting ready for their long journey. And when they are all able to start, off they go over the wide seas, to seek other abodes. Sometimes, they may be seen far out at sea, even hundreds of miles from land, by sailors, on the rigging of whose ships they will rest by scores, till able to resume their

journey. Many of them, doubtless, weary of their flight, fall into the sea, and so become food for fishes.

The red-start, which frequents old abbeys, castle-walls, and ruinous buildings; the swift, the yellow-wren, the white-throat, and the willow-wren, are also birds of passage, and may be seen with us as the season advances. They feed chiefly on flies and *insects*; and, it may be, as their food becomes scarce, they, one by one, desert our shores for lands where a more certain supply may be had.

You ask me, what an *insect* is? I am pleased with your request, since it is a clear proof that you are willing to know all you can,

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and to gain all the knowledge you may be able. Children who are too lazy to ask questions, or too content with the little they know, to search farther for wisdom, must be classed with the stupid and vulgar. When a great man was asked, one day, by a friend, how he could have gained knowledge on so many subjects, and to such a great extent; he said in reply, "I was never above asking, even the humblest, for that which I neither knew myself, nor could learn from my books." An insect, my children, is a living creature, whose body appears to be formed of two distinct parts; as a wasp, or an ant, a common fly, or a beetle. See, there is a bee on

the petal, or flower leaf, of that blossom, cleaning and drying his wings, which, I suppose, he has just wetted with a drop of dew. Observe it well ; its body is formed of two parts, closely joined by a very slender thread, as it were ; hence it seems almost cut in two pieces. The word *insect* is taken from a verb in the Latin language, which means *to cut*, or *divide*.

Do you not hear something crying out, *Pee-wit, Pee-wit* ? That sound proceeds from a bird ; and, as we must return home now, I will give you a brief account of it on our way back.

The lapwing, plover, or pee-wit, so named from the sound it makes,

is a bird that frequents marshy or heathy land, and is very common in the fenny parts of this island. The pee-wits make no nests, but lay their eggs on the bare ground, amongst reeds and rushes, in the moors and fens, or in high grass on the banks of drains, or sometimes in fields. They feed upon worms and slugs ; and the sound, *Pee-wit*, which they make, is to allure persons from the place where their eggs, or callow young ones, lie.

Sometimes, they feign lameness, or appear to have a broken wing ; and any one, thinking that to be the case, and their noise a cry of distress, pursues them to take or catch them ; and he may think him-



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self well off, if he escape without getting his shoes full of water, or up to his knees in mud, in his vain and foolish pursuit.

When I was a young and thoughtless boy, I can call to mind, very well, going out, one day, in search of heath and moor flowers by myself; when, having reached a moor, or flat piece of wet, boggy ground, a bird sprang upon a sudden before me, and began to cry *Pee-wit, Pee-wit*. I thought also it seemed to be hurt, as it flew in a very strange way, and at times fell to the ground. I went after it, as fast as my legs would carry me, through mire and weeds, and sedge, till at length I slipped into

a kind of bog above my knees. Here I gave up the chase, for I could proceed no farther; and the bird seemed to know so too, for he flew away from me as well as ever I saw a bird fly in my life. An old man, picking water-cresses, helped me out of the muddy place I had run into in my haste, and then told me, it was a trick of the bird's, to draw me away from its nest, which was, without doubt, near the spot where I first began my luckless chase.

And now, my children, as our ramble is over, I trust you will call to mind, at your leisure, the sights you have seen this morning, and the accounts which I have given

you of them: that you may become wise, day by day, in those things which belong to your welfare, your true wisdom and peace. If you have thought of God before, as a *great and wise being*; from what you have now seen and heard, if you judge aright, you will think still better of Him, and love Him more and more. And now let us go in to breakfast, for there is your kind mamma looking from the garden, to see if her dear children are coming. Run forward then, and greet her with a morning kiss and a posey.

From each bird, or beast, or flower,
Sage instruction may be drawn;

Not an insect skims the air,
Nor a songster wakes the morn,
But may teach thee lessons rare
Of a Father's heavenly care:

Then, my child, whene'er thy feet
Through the fields of nature stray,
Think not exercise alone
All the bus'ness of thy way :
But from all things wisdom gain,
Then thou wilt not walk in vain.

CHAPTER IV.

EARLY MORN.

My voice shalt Thou hear in the morning, O
 Lord! In the morning will I direct my prayer
 unto Thee, and will look up. PSALM.

The morn, in russet mantle clad,
 Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastern hill.
SHAKESPEARE.

How beautiful is morn!
 When daylight newly born,
 From the bright portals of the East is breaking;
 While songs of joy resound
 From countless warblers round,
 To light and life from silent slumber waking.
B. BARTON.

THE morning star is pale,
And the mist is on the flood ;
There 's silence in the vale,
And stillness in the wood.

The birds are yet asleep,
With their heads beneath their wing ;
And lazy vapours creep
Around the willow spring.

But now a gentle flush
In the East begins to spread,
As if the sky might blush
To see her monarch's head.

And now the village spire
Hath caught his yellow ray ;
And with his steeds of fire,
Comes forth the gladsome day.

The mist now rolls along
From the stream, the wood, and vale,
And the merry birdies' song
Is on the morning gale.

The lark has left its nest,
And in the blue profound,
With upward towering breast,
Pours notes of praise around.

The rooks, with cawing note,
Are wheeling round their trees;
And the throstle's silver throat
With music fills the breeze.

And now along the plain
The flock is spreading wide;
And pouring from the pen,
Like foam upon the tide.

All the valleys of the earth,
And the regions of the air,
Are full of sounds of mirth,
And perfume sweet and rare.

From all beneath the skies,
Where the light of day is spread,
A thousand altars rise,
With incense on their head.

Then, hail, thou gladsome day!
Sweet blessing, kindly given,
To lend the soul a ray
Of holy joy from Heaven;
To fill the heart with love,
And bid it spread abroad
The praise of Him above,
Our Father and our Lord!

CHAPTER V.

AN EVENING STROLL TO THE SHEPHERD'S HUT ;
OR, MAXIMS WORTH KNOWING.

As the weather has been so very warm to-day, that we could not take our noontide walk into the grounds, we will therefore avail ourselves of this sweet evening for a stroll to the shepherd's hut on the heath. If we lose no time now, we shall reach the Beacon Hill, on our return, by sunset, when the sight of the blazing orb of day going to his rest behind the hills, will alone amply repay us for our ramble.

How calm the face of Nature is !

and how sweet and soft the breeze of eve floats along the earth ! There is no noise in the fields now : the peasants have done their day's work, and are gone home to rest ; the horses are browsing at ease in the fields, the cows are quiet in the pastures, and the sheep, with their little lambs, are all shut up in their folds ; the birds are singing their last song of eve, and all nature is gently settling down into repose and peace, beneath the vast dome of heaven, the blue curtains of the world. Nothing disturbs the quiet around, unless it be the cawing of the rooks, which are wheeling round and round their leafy homes, and dropping one by one, into

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their lofty nests. The flowers also, with drooping heads, prepare for their slumbers, by closing their leaves, and shutting their bright starry eyes from the glory of the falling day.

A murmur of sweet sounds comes floating across the wide waters of the river, like music from afar; it is the hymn of even, the vesper song of nature to its God, in which all voices join, of man, of bird, and beast—of stream and wood, and widely-flowing sea. Our's too, my children, may join the swelling chorus; for we have a part in all that God has made, and the grateful hymn of one of the *least* of

His children will be pleasing in His ears, and grateful to His Spirit.—

EVEN SONG.

ERE yet, my God, the day may end,
Or slumber seal my eyes ;
To Thee, my Father, and my Friend,
O let my song arise.

When all around, below, above,
One general anthem raise,
Wilt Thou refuse, thou God of Love,
An infant's song of praise ?

O teach my little heart to feel
The blessings of Thy light ;
My lips Thy mercies to reveal—
And guide my steps aright.

O never let me turn aside,
To follow vice and shame ;
Thy words of wisdom to deride,
Or slight Thy Holy Name.

Be with me in the brightest day,
The darkest gloom of night,

And cheer each shadow of my way
With Thy most blessed light !

So shall my days run smoothly by,
And brighten to their close,
Till, like the sun in western sky,
My soul shall to thy glory fly,
And in Thine arms repose.

Well, we have at length reached the heath, and my old friend, the Shepherd's Hut, in which we have many times taken shelter from the rains. But its tenant is now gone to his long home—the grave. I knew him well, and oftentimes, when a boy, have I rambled to see old John, in his turf-built hut, with his dogs Keeper and Mungo; the one a fine North-country shepherd's dog, the other a kind of black spaniel,

may fancy him now speaking to you such lessons of wisdom as he had learnt from the best and purest source—God, and laid up in the corners of his own mind for the good of his young hearers.

A SHEPHERD'S MAXIMS.

“Never praise any one to his face, lest he praise not you.”

“The cat, out of false kindness, came one day to visit a sick hen, and asked her how she did: the hen replied, ‘The better if you were farther off.’ In the same way answer all idle and vain persons.”

“Silence is the wisdom of a fool; speech, of a wise man.”

“If the clock of the tongue be

not set by the dial of the heart, all will not go right."

"Confine your tongue, or it will confine you."

"Never speak ill of any man: if of a good man, it is sin; if of a bad man, give him your prayers."

"Little children love each other—
Brother sister, sister brother;
Parents, kindred, first embrace,
Then forget not all your race."

"I envy none that know more than myself, but pity them that know less."

"Be content with a *single* faith in God, the comforts of a good life, and the hopes of a better through

Him who said, ' Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not.' ”

“ Let your prayers be as frequent as your wants, and your thanks as your blessings.”

“ You may be certain, he has no firm belief in God, or in the world to come, who dares to be wicked.”

“ In the morning, I converse with the dead ; at noon, with the living ; at night, with myself ; yet I don't trouble my head with much reading.”

“ Say what is well, and do what is better ; be what you appear, and appear what you are.”

“ Love God, honour your pa-

rents, respect your neighbour as yourself, and then say ‘I am not good.’”

Such were the maxims taught us by the good old man; but now he lies at rest, and the lips of wisdom are silent! Let him, humble as he was, be a pattern to you; and from him learn that wisdom is not confined to the learned only; and that the world is not yet so bad, but that virtue will meet with its own reward sooner or later; and that the best way to prepare for death is by a well-spent life.

The sun is now bidding us farewell, and the shades of eve are spreading around; let us, therefore, trace our steps home by the

way of the Beacon Hill, to observe the orb of day going down to his bed of glory. A little toil will bring us to the top, and we shall be well repaid for our trouble.

Now, then, here we are, at length, and now look at the sun in his decline of brightness! See the rich clouds, spread above his head like curtains of all colours, woven in gold and silver! Now he rests his broad orb on the lowest verge of the earth, (called the horizon,) and steals slowly away behind the ridge of the hill, burning in his brightness. Like the good man leaving the world, which his presence has blest; beaming brightly at his close, and gaining purer glory as he draws

nearer to his Heaven; so the sun
sinks down to his rest in peace
cradled with fleecy clouds, and
curtained with God's own glory.
Now, my children, for home, sup-
per, prayers, and bed.

Evening comes in dewy state;
Let us on its advent wait.
And as slowly spreads its veil
Over mountain, stream, and dale,
Let our cares in peace subside,
As bubbles on the waveless tide;
And each chaste emotion rest
(Like young birds in their downy nest)
In silent joy within the breast.

The sun, with glory in his train,
Sinks beneath the western main;
And quiet shadows steal along,
And hush'd is every minstrel's song.
The hymn of praise has died away,
And flown the charms of smiling day.

So, when our work of praise be done,
May we, like yonder setting sun,
Repose our heads in silent rest,
With God's protecting presence blest :
All cares forgot, all fears allay'd,
And all our hopes divinely stay'd !

CHAPTER VI.

THE MORNING STORM ; OR THE WONDERS
OF NATURE EXPLAINED.

THE sun has been up for some hours, my children, but as yet he has not shewn us his beams ; the heavens being so black with heavy clouds, that he cannot struggle through them, to shed his bright rays upon the world. I fear, it will soon rain, and prevent us taking our

morning ramble ; indeed, the low roll of the thunder afar off, forbids us making the attempt. A storm is coming up, as you may see by that long dark cloud, with jagged edges : and now it lightens ; a peal of thunder will soon follow ; and now I can hear the sound of rain coming up with the wind.

What a solemn stillness is around us, as though Nature waited, in dread suspense, some mighty change, some wondrous trial of her strength. The very beasts of the earth are also aware of the rising tempest. See ! the cattle are running about the fields in their fright, the birds are startled from their nests, and the trees bend their heads to the

gale. Our dog Tray is even slinking and cringing away to some shelter ; and all things give presage that a dreadful warfare is near at hand. But fear not, my little ones ; the hand of God is over you, to protect you from harm, as much in the windy storm and tempest, as in the calmest hour of life. No lightning can scorch, nor thunder dash you to the ground, unless He permit : at the same time, it is not meet that we should try His strength and goodness by running needless risks ; therefore come away from the window, and sit in the middle of the room, apart from any thing made of iron or steel, as bell-wires, fire-irons, or curtain-rods, which some-

times so conduct the lightning, as to cause the death of any one near them.

Be as calm as you can, under the present trial of your strength in God, when His awful voice speaks words of dread meaning to the souls of men, in the rolling thunder; and His might is seen in the forked lightnings now splitting huge trees into shivers, setting fire to buildings, and melting down the hardest metals, like wax in the blaze of a taper. Let your faith in the goodness and power of God support you in this hour of trial, and I will strive to render the present scene a lesson of wisdom to you, by shewing you the nature of some

of His handyworks, and deeds of loving-kindness to the sons of men. In the first place, I will strive to explain to you, in the easiest way in my power, that thunder and lightning are but the simple result of certain changes which have taken place in the earth, the clouds, or the heavens above us. The lightning is nothing more than a certain unseen fluid, (the nature of which it would be folly in me to attempt to explain to you at such an early age,) with which the heavens and earth are more or less stored. This fluid we will suppose to ascend from the earth, till a mighty mass of it may fill the sky above, mingling with floating vapours and foam-

ing clouds, which we call thunder clouds. These clouds move over the earth, till they find a spot where there is a want of this wonderful fluid ; it then escapes from them, and streams to the earth in a zig-zag course, like a sudden current of flame ; a report is then heard, which we call the thunder : and thus the simple causes of a tempest may be made in some degree clear to your minds.

When the fluid bursts from the cloud, its vivid and bright course is called the *lightning*, and its report the *thunder* ; and the reason why we do not hear the latter when we see the former is easy to account for, since sound travels so slowly

when compared with light. Thus, if you see a person fire a gun, you see the flash some seconds of time before you hear the report, and a bird may be killed by the shot from the gun long before you know, except from the flash, that the gun has been fired. In like manner, when you hear the blast of the thunder at a great distance of time after the flash of the lightning, you may know that the storm is far off; but when both come at the same instant of time, you may be certain that the storm is over your heads. If you feel your pulse, and find that it beats five times between the flash and the report, you may infer from thence, that the storm is about a

mile off; if ten times, two miles; fifteen, three miles,—and so on.

If you should be in the fields, never go under a tree for shelter, but stand some fifty or sixty yards from it, as trees in some degree attract the fluid, and your danger would be great. Rods of iron are sometimes placed at the ends of buildings, to conduct the lightning to the earth, and thereby save them from harm; and I myself once saw the lightning run down a wire, or rod of this kind, on the outside of a steeple to the ground, with perfect safety: had there been no wire to conduct the lightning, doubtless the steeple would have been shattered to pieces by its wondrous power

and strength. Such, my children, is the cause of the storm now pouring its fury on the earth ; and well will it be for us to lay these things to heart ; and, whilst we account for all in our minds, forget not the Author of all in our hearts, but see, even in this fearful strife of nature,

A Father, God, that o'er the storm presides ;
Threatens to save, and loves when most He chides.

The storm has at length passed away : to God be the praise that we are spared ! And now nothing remains for us to do, but to wait till the patter of the rain abroad is over. Still, although you cannot walk at present, and gain knowledge from the handyworks of God in the fields

of nature, it would be shameful for you to sit and do nothing, or worse still, to repine at the weather. I will therefore explain several other little matters, which may at present be hidden from your minds, such as the cause and nature of rain, hail, snow, mists, and dews.

I will therefore begin by telling you, that all steams or vapours, which rise from the earth, form clouds. For instance, if you observe a copper of boiling water, you will see that a vapour, or steam, rises from the surface of the water, and ascends very high into the air. If you stand at some distance also from a brick-kiln, or any place whence a thick, dark, smoky vapour

rises, you may very plainly see a cloud forming over the spot, or spreading along the sky by the force of the wind. Such is the way in which *clouds* are formed : not that they are caused by the smoke of these places only, for the earth is always pouring out vapours from its surface ; as you may perceive by placing a drinking-glass with its top downwards on the grass in a warm day, when the vapour, or steam, will settle on the inside, and run down in large drops ; a sure proof that a kind of steam, or vapour, is leaving the face of the earth.

This vapour rises to a certain height in the air, and is then called

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a cloud. When these clouds unite, or form a mass too heavy for the air to bear, they return their contents to the earth, in the form of a shower of drops, and this is what we call *rain*. When these drops fall to the earth, through a part of the air where a cold wind prevails, they freeze into little round white balls as they descend, and become what we call *hailstones*.

When the clouds are frozen before they join in one mass above, and fall to the earth, they divide into flakey parts, like small feathers, and form *snow*.

When the nights are cool, and those vapours which the earth exhales are cooled before they rise

many feet above its surface, so that they form a thick and dense cloud on the face of the ground, we call it a *mist*, or *fog*. Also, when this vapour which ascends from the earth, is by the coolness of the night formed into small drops, which by their weight fall again to the earth, and settle on the leaves of trees, plants, herbs, &c. we call it *dew*.

In some parts of the world, these *dews* are so heavy as to refresh the earth like falling showers. I could here shew you the wisdom of God in working such wonders for His people, were it not that it would require much time and many words to render it at all easy for you to see the matter as I do. At any

rate, you are well aware that, without spring showers, all our flowers, herbs, and plants, would shrivel up to bare stalks and dead leaves. Famines have in some places been caused by a want of showers; and, doubtless, it is one of the means by which God visits the sins of His people, or tries their faith in Him, when he permits a drought among them.

And here I cannot close my lecture, without shewing how wise it is for us to resign ourselves to the decrees of God, whether it please Him to afflict us by heat or drought, cold or wet, famine or dearth. One of the prophets* in the Bible de-

* Habakkuk.

clares his trust in God, (how happy would it be for us if we could speak and feel in like manner !) by saying, " Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines, the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat, the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls ; yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my strength and salvation."

Though storms arise, and tempests roar,
And ocean rave from shore to shore ;
Though earthquakes rend the solid ground,
And thunders roll with awful sound ;
Though waters swell on every side,
Rebellious as the threat'ning tide ;
Oh never let my trust in *Thee*
One moment turn aside, but be

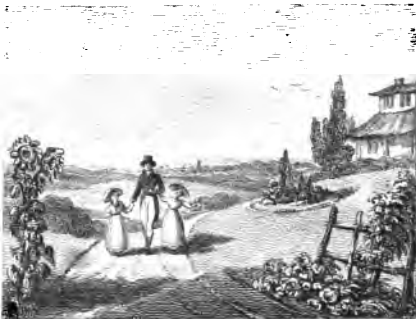
Firm as the rock amid the wave,
When mighty billows round it rave,
And tempest blasts their fury shed
Upon its tried yet fearless head.
So shall I find in Thee at last
A refuge till the storm be past ;
A hiding-place, till, storms away,
I live with *Thee* in endless day !





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CHAPTER VII.

AN EVENING IN THE SUMMER-HOUSE; OR,
THE WONDERS OF THE HEAVENS.

The Heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth His handyworks. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. In them hath He set a tabernacle for the sun, whose going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it, and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof. O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is Thy Name in all the earth!

PSALMS.

As the ground is so very wet and dirty, that we cannot take our evening stroll with any degree of comfort, we will merely walk to our summer-house on the Mount. There

we shall have a wide and noble view, around, below, and above us ; and as we shall have an *eclipse* of the moon at a quarter before eleven, I will strive to teach you a lesson from the book of wonders before us, the *heavens*, in order that you may be able to account for certain changes, which take place among the bodies of light which move there, night after night, in such perfect order and silence. You will also be able to learn something of the earth on which you live—an object which deserves the notice of all, whether rich or poor, old or young.

You have all heard, without doubt, my dear children, of a place

called *Heaven*, the blessed abode of good men made perfect, and the place where it pleaseth God to dwell with them in the brightness of His glory, for ever and ever. By the word *Heaven*, therefore, I mean, a world of love, peace, and bliss ; but, when I speak of THE HEAVENS, I mean, the blue sky above us, with its sun, moon, planets, stars, and clouds. Now, as you are all creatures, formed, like them, by God, and as He has given you reason, strength of mind, and power of thought, to look into and weigh these matters of yourselves, it is but just that you should use them aright, and study to find Him and His wisdom out, in all His works

and ways, that you may say with truth, “ Truly, I have cause to praise, serve, and adore Him :” for, unless you do this, you cannot love Him as you ought, nor see Him as He is, your Maker, your Father, and your Friend.

A child, who has never seen the wonders around him, nor thought to himself why trees should bear fruit, grass grow for the food of beasts, and corn for man ; or why the sun should shine by day, or the moon by night ; may talk and think idly on these things : but one who has once learned what it is to know God, and to see Him in His works, never can.

In the first place, I must tell you, that the sun, which is now hiding his light from our eyes, does not move, but is fixed firmly in his place, as a centre, or middle, for other globes, or balls, of light to move round. He is there placed by the hand of God, to afford light and heat to the world, or system, of which he is the middle, or centre. Around him, seven globes, or balls, of which the earth on which we live is one, are always moving; although not at the same distance from the sun, nor in the same space of time. The time taken for each one to go quite round the sun is called its year.

The First, called Mercury, goes round the Sun in 87 days, its year.

Second, Venus, the same, in 224 days, the same.

Third, Earth, the same, in 365 days, the same.

Fourth, Mars, the same, in 686 days, the same.

Fifth, Jupiter, the same, in 4332 days, the same.

Sixth, Saturn, the same, in 10,754 days, the same.

The Seventh, Herschel, goes round the Sun in 30,708 days, its year.

Thus, if you take eight marbles, and place one for the sun, and then draw seven rings round the marble called the sun, the first at four inches distance from it, the second at seven inches, the third at ten inches, the fourth at fifteen inches, the fifth at fifty-two inches, the sixth at ninety-five inches, and the seventh at one hundred and ninety-one inches, and place a marble in

each ring for the planets, you will have a view, upon a small scale, of what is called the Solar System. The earth, on which we live, you perceive, is the third of these worlds, globes, or planets, from the sun. You will, perhaps, ask, how it is that at times we are in darkness, and that the sun appears to leave us, if it do not move. Very true, the sun may *appear* to move, and there must be a movement or change somewhere, to cause our *night* and *day*; but the *earth moves*, and not the sun; in the same way as one of the marbles would if you were to roll it along the ring upon the ground. Thus, you see, if I bowl this orange along

the floor, it not only keeps turning over and over, but, at the same time, it pursues its way from one side of the room to the other. And again, if I tie an apple by the stalk, and hang it on a nail, or from a beam, and then hold a candle, which I will call the *sun*, against one side of it, by twirling the apple round, you may see why one side of the earth seems to turn from the sun and another to it. The orange rolling over shews you how the earth moves daily ; every complete turning round being a *day* and a *night* ; its running along the floor, shews you its *yearly* pathway, which must, of course, be like a *circle*, or rather an oval, and not straight ; and the

apple turning round in the light of the candle, shews you how its *days* and *nights* are occasioned. You may say, perhaps, I cannot find that *I move*, or, indeed, that the *earth moves*; but if you are going from one place to another in a coach, or in a chaise, and look but at the trees and hedges, they will seem to be moving, and gliding by you, one after another;—in like manner, we look at the sun, moon, and stars, and fancy they are moving to and from us, when indeed they are *still*, and we on a globe always *whirling round*.

All the stars which you may see at night,—I mean those stars which always keep at the same distance

with regard to each other,—are called *fixed stars* ; and are thought by the learned to be *suns* of other systems, having worlds going round them the same as our sun, only too small, and at too great a distance, for us to perceive them.

As it is now getting somewhat damp, we will adjourn to my study, where I will try to explain some other little matters to you, of a very pleasing and sublime nature, and conclude the subject on which I first began ; namely, an *eclipse*.

THE STUDY LECTURE.

The earth, on which we live, has also a globe to attend it on its way round the sun ; which globe we call

the moon. The *moon* also moves round the earth as its centre, whilst it pursues its yearly course, going round it in about twenty-eight days, which we call a *month*. And as the moon receives all its light from the sun, in the same way as the earth does, so, as it keeps moving round us, we do not always see the whole face of the moon, which is lighted by the sun. When we see the whole of the light part of the moon, we call it a *full moon*; and when it turns its light part from us, so that we see nothing of it at night at all, it is called a *new moon*: for, in a few days after that time, we see part of a narrow ring, or *crescent of light*, which grows

larger, night after night, till it is at its *full*, and then it grows less till it wanes away, sinks into shade, and again becomes *new*.

If you look at the moon now through the window, you will perceive a part of it dark, and hidden from the sight ; and the longer you look at it, the more the dark part will increase, till at length it will pass quite over its face, and hide it from our sight. This is what we call an *eclipse of the moon*. An eclipse of the moon, means the hiding of a part or the whole of its light ; and the same holds good in regard to the *sun*.

You will perhaps wish to learn how an *eclipse* is caused ; if you will attend to me, I will gladly ex-

plain it to you. I have before told you, that the sun is the source of light to all the *planets, globes, or worlds of its system*. Suppose I take a candle, a ball of wood, and a round apple, and call the *candle the sun*, the apple the *earth*, and the ball of wood the *moon*. If I were to place the candle upon a table, and then hang the apple by its stalk, so that the rays of light from the candle fell full upon it, you would see, that any fly, or insect, on the bright side of the apple, would behold the candle, or sun. Now, if I were also to hang the ball of wood by a string, and place it between the candle and the apple, the shadow of the wooden ball would fall upon the apple, and

the fly, or insect, on that part of the apple in the shade, would not be able to see the candle because of the wooden ball. Thus, you see, in that case, an eclipse, or hiding of the candle, would take place to those who lived on the outside of the apple : in like manner, as regards an eclipse of the sun, which is caused by the *moon* coming *between* the *earth* and the *sun*, and hiding its beams from those who live on that part of the earth where the shadow falls. An eclipse of the moon is also caused by the earth coming between the sun and the moon ; in which case, of course, the shadow of the earth must fall upon the moon : which is very clear, from the outside of the

shadow being part of a round, or circle, a proof that it is caused by a body that is round also. Thus, if you hold the ball of wood, which I will call the moon, so as to leave the apple between it and the candle, or sun, then the shadow of the apple, or the earth, falling upon the ball of wood, causes an eclipse, or hiding of the moon, to us. Therefore, the sum of all is this ; that an *eclipse* of the *moon* is caused by the earth coming in a direct line between it and the sun ; and an *eclipse* of the sun, by the moon coming between the earth, and the sun, so as to prevent its light reaching us. Some people, who live in countries and kingdoms which have never

been blessed by the light of truth, and who have never heard the Lessons of Wisdom, are so frightened when an eclipse appears, as to fancy, either that the world is coming to an end, or that some dreadful event is about to take place; and they run about almost wild with fear, or seek to their *stone or wooden idols, or gods*, for support or favour. Indeed, our fathers, many years back, had feelings and fears of the same sort; but since it has pleased God to shed the knowledge of Himself abroad in our hearts, and since the minds of men have become better stored with the lessons of wisdom and true learning, all such foolish fears have been

done away with. Well would it be for us, that all learning went no farther than this, to clear away all blindness of heart, and to make the wisdom and goodness of God more clear to our minds ! For, after all, true knowledge is that which leads us to perceive our own weakness, God's greatness, human frailty, and divine wisdom.

How goodly are thy works, O Lord,
How far surpassing thought !
What mortal man can hope to see
Thy greatness and immensity,
In all which Thou hast wrought ?

The wisest sage, the subtlest seer,
Of earth's exalted race,
Say, can he grasp with mortal mind
Thy greatness, to no bounds confined,
And see Thee face to face ?

As well might he, with daring hand,
Presume Thy power to stay,
Control the planet in its course,
Or, with a pigmy's fury, force
The sun in gloom astray.

LIFE.

The Spring returns, with beauty clad,
And verdure spreads around ;
The little hills look green and glad,
And daisies deck the ground :
There 's joy in ev'ry hedge and bower,
And music in each tree ;
And perfumes breathe ~~from~~ ev'ry flower,
And all is mirth and glee. .

But soon the Summer's parching heat
Shall change the green to sere ;
And Autumn shew, around his feet,
The glories of the year.
Stern Winter next, in tempest clad,
Shall work a fearful change ;
And through the meadows, once so glad,
A cruel spoiler range.

E'en thus, my child, thy spring of life
Shall fleetly pass away ;
And clouds of care, and storms of strife,
Sweep o'er thy little day.
Then, whilst the privilege is thine,
O seize each flying hour !
Prepare thy soul for realms divine,
Where changeless glories ever shine,
And time hath lost its power.

CHAPTER VIII.

AN EVENING WALK IN THE GARDEN.

As it is too warm and sultry to walk far this evening, with any degree of comfort to ourselves, we will confine our walk to the precincts of the lawn, garden, and paddock, where, I have no doubt, we shall find much to amuse and

instruct. There are many children, I make no doubt, who are not able to define what a *plant*, a *shrub*, an herb, or a flower is ; or, at any rate, what they are formed of. Their want of knowledge too, for the most part, may arise from a want of means of *gaining knowledge* ; but you, my children, have no such excuse to make ; and you may be certain that your Divine Parent, God, has not given you talents to improve in vain. ~~He will require~~ proofs at your hands, that you have sought to enlarge the powers of your mind, and to become wise in those things which belong to your peace.

I do not wish to preach a long

discourse to you on the matter; I only wish to convince you, that, to acquire real knowledge and wisdom, is not only a duty you owe to yourself and your friends, but to that *Good Being* who has blessed you with the means whereby you may *obtain* it, and *profit* by it.

But now that we are in the garden, I will begin by shewing you the difference between an *herb* and a *shrub*.

Herbs are those plants which have soft stalks, that is to say, fibrous stalks, having no wood about them; such as the lettuce, grass, thistles, cowslips, daisies, and common garden and meadow flowers.

Shrubs are *plants* which, though

woody, seem but trees on a *small scale*, and spread their branches but at a very little distance from the surface of the earth; such as currants, roses, and sweetbrier bushes.

Trees, as you very well know, shoot up, with one or more large stems, to a vast height, and sometimes cast a shadow over a great space of ground, spreading their first branches at some height from the earth, that shrubs and herbs may have room to grow also. And, now I am speaking of trees, I cannot but tell you of *one* which grows in the eastern part of the world, called the *banian*, or *Banyan-tree*, or the Indian fig-tree.

These trees are of a very won-





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drous size, and appear to be exempt from decay. The stem, at first, throws out branches, which branches bend to the earth and take root, and then throw out others, as from a parent stem ; and thus they continue to spread, every new branch forming as it were a new tree, till there would appear to be no end to their growth and increase. The Hindoos, or natives of these parts, venerate them much, and look upon them as emblems of God, from their duration, and the kind and welcome shadow they afford ; a blessing much to be valued in the hot climates. Beneath their shade the natives have the most delightful walks you can conceive ; for, even in the hottest

days, the sun cannot pierce through their thickly matted branches. Thus you see, my children, how kind our Maker and Heavenly Father is to all His people, and with what care He provides for all their wants, and defends them from aught that may harm, or injure them.

The largest known *banian-tree* is called *Cubbeer Bur*, from the name of a famous Hindoo *saint*, a holy man, and is not less than two thousand feet round, if you measure but the principal stems. The chief trunks of this tree are three hundred and fifty in number, each much larger than oaks and elms; and the smaller stems are more than three thousand; all of them

throwing out branches, and new stems, forming arcades, bowers, alleys, and green vistas, to such an extent, that more than seven thousand persons may find ample room to repose in its shade. The English who reside near it, in their hunting and shooting parties, spend many weeks in a kind of camp under this wonder of the East; and as it is always filled with green wood-pigeons, doves, peacocks, and other handsome and sweet singing Eastern birds, no place can be imagined more delightful and pleasant. Besides this, there are many monkey families, who live in its branches, and, of course, do not forget to play off all their antics and tricks,

as they feed on its scarlet figs ; and frolic about, from bough to bough, in perfect safety. I think, I remember some lines of a female Hindoo's song to the *banian-tree*, which I will repeat, if possible—

THE HINDOO WIDOW'S SONG.

Oh ! blessings be on thee, thou Banian-tree !
Kindly thou'st shaded my baby and me.
The sun was high, and the sands were hot,
When I left my palm-tree shaded cot
For the tomb of the saint, (my vows to pay,)
Through the dreary walks of a desert way.
My baby it wept as I drew near thee ;
And I blessed thy shadow, my Banian-tree.
Ah ! well do I love thee ! and when I pray,
I'll think on thee, though I'm far away ;
And blessings shall on thee fall, and rest ;
For thou shelter'dst a babe at the widow's breast ;
Whose lips shall open with praise of thee,
My hallow'd and shadowy Banian-tree !

The principal parts of plants are the *root*, the *stalk*, or stem, the *leaves*, *flowers*, and *seeds* ; although there are plants which are without some of them ; as the fern, for instance, which has no flowers.

The office of the root is to supply the plant with its proper juices, or nutriment ; all which it absorbs, or sucks in, from the earth. It also performs the part of a parent ; preserving the young plants in its bosom, during the cold season of winter, in the form either of bud or bulb.

A *bulbous* root is one which grows in the shape of an *onion* or a *turnip* ; having *suckers*, or small roots, at its base, or lower part ;

drawing moisture from the earth, for the increase of the bulb above, and for the support of the plant growing out of the bulb.

The trunk, or *stem*, consists of many parts ; as the *bark*, *wood*, *pith*, and *sap* vessels. The bark performs, for the most part, the same office to them, as the skin does to animals : it clothes and defends them from harm, inhales or draws in the moisture of the air, and conveys that moisture from the plant which it does not require. The bark, as well as the wood, has many vessels, which convey the sap, and other juices of the plants, into every part : all destined to serve some particular purpose. The strength of a tree con-

sists in the wood ; for some are very easy to be broken asunder, whilst others defy the sharpest tools. The pith is a fine collection and arrangement of vessels ; and appears to be placed in the centre of the stem, for its better safeguard and protection, and for spreading its benefits equally to all parts. It is supposed to be the seat of life ; and may be compared to the *spinal* marrow, or that fine silver cord, which exists in the backbone of animals, which, once separated, causes instant death.

The juices of the plant are something like the blood in our bodies ; and, doubtless, perform somewhat similar offices. The leaves are also of great use to the plant ; serving,

as some suppose, the office of lungs ; *inhaling*, that is, drawing, or sucking in ; and *exhaling*, that is, breathing, or pouring out, air and moisture.

The flower is but the blossom, or first evidence of the fruit, or seeds ; and appears to be designed for the protection of the young seed, for the food of insects, and for the beauty of nature, and the delight of man.

We will, if you please, examine, or analyse, this piece of elder. First, you see, we cut through the *bark*, next the *wood*, and then comes the *pith*. If you examine the *bark*, it is wet with the *sap* of the plant ; and now, if you look close to the wood,

you find, it is composed of porous vessels ; that is to say, hollow tubes, all arranged round the stem, in circles. By counting these circles, you may be able to form a shrewd guess as to the age of the tree ; for, woodmen say, one of these rings is formed every year. Indeed, I have heard also, that the *pith* is never exactly in the centre ; for that part of the tree which is exposed to cold north winds, does not grow so fast as the opposite side, which, of course, receives the full power of the sun. It therefore follows, that the parts between the circles towards the north, are not so wide as they are on the other side of the tree. I have read somewhere of a

traveller losing his way ; but, on examining a tree, by the means of a hatchet, which he had with him, he discovered the *north side* ; and, having found that out, he felt no longer doubtful which way to go. He might have known that also from the sun ; for, if you stand with your face to the sun, in the middle of the day, when it is in the *south*, the *north* will be at your *back*, the *east* on your *left* hand, and the *west* on your *right* : but perhaps the sun did not shine that day ; so there was some excuse for the poor man.

The pith comes next to view ; and, if you examine that with a microscope, or a glass, which increases the size of things to a great

extent, you will see a most wonderful and beautiful collection of vessels, all operating for the life, health, and increase of the plant.

Having thus explained to you some of the uses of the different parts of plants, we will close our walk, and retire to our studies within; and there, ere our eyes close for the night, pour out our praises to the great and good Author of all, for His power, wisdom, and goodness, as evinced in the works of His creation. I have often told you, how great reason we have to admire the excellence of His wisdom, as proved even by the smallest works of His hands; for, surely, His greatness is not less

evidenced by this simple leaf, I have just picked up, with its external coat eaten off by insects, than by the loftiest production of His power. Take it in your hands, and examine it well ; see its beautiful construction ; and, if any mortal man can, even with the most choice materials, form so fine a piece of network, and arrange its parts with such a fitness for their respective uses, I will be content to think him as a power but little less than God. But the Almighty has formed this from the *dust of the earth*, and nurtured it with the dews of heaven. Can it then be called less than a convincing proof of the existence of God, a clear evidence of the

being of a Divine Power, whose attributes and qualities exceed all human understanding?

All things attest *one mighty cause*,
That mighty cause, a God ;
Alike they 're govern'd by His laws,
And subject to His nod.

The simplest leaf, and humblest flower,
Their destined end fulfil,
And ev'ry token of His power
Bespeaks His wondrous skill.

If I survey the heav'ns above,
Or view the earth beneath,
I see but proofs of heav'nly love
In all that live or breathe.

Myself, how wonderfully form'd !
My frame, how fitly made !
What other power a clod had warm'd
But His whom seas obey'd ?

To Him, then, let all praises rise,
All things their gladness shew,
Till general anthems fill the skies,
And shake the earth below.



CHAPTER IX.

AN ADDRESS TO MY LITTLE READERS.

HAVING concluded my little Spring Course of Lectures, my dear children, I wish now, in conclusion, to convince you, although I may have mentioned some things which you may suppose perfectly useless, that there is nothing which purifies, exalts, and strengthens the mind, more than knowledge. I do not mean, by the word *knowledge*, a perfect acquaintance with but one branch of learning; I mean, a general intimacy with things.

Do you not find, that, in going with me through the fields of na-

ture, you have gained a more intimate, extensive, and pure view of the God that made you? Do you not find, that there is a certain pleasure drawn from the knowledge of things once hidden from your view, which no one can so well appreciate, or value, as one who has gained that knowledge?

And again, can you conceive a nobler employment for the mind of man, than the attainment of that wisdom which is gained from the creatures of God? And think you not that He will bless the inquiries even of a child, when He hath said, by the mouth of His dear *Son, our Saviour*, "Suffer little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not?"

What a salutary check it will be upon you, at all times, and in all places, if you feel that He is always *near you*, and that His eye is *always upon you* ! And what a motive of thankfulness will it be to you, if you, from conviction, can behold Him attending you in your walks, as a Guardian and Friend ; spreading out the beauties and wonders of nature before you, for your pleasure and amusement ; and, with His kind parental hand, shielding you from danger, and leading your feet into the way of peace, and the path of heavenly wisdom !

In proof of the utility of general knowledge, look at the condition of one, cast upon a desert

island, who had not stored his mind with the uses, natures, and properties of things. Would not every animal, although harmless in itself, from his ignorance, be a terror to him? Would not every tree, producing fruit unknown to him, be as one bearing poison for him?—Would not even the fish of the sea before unheard of, be considered, perhaps, as baneful to him? Or, supposing he had no such doubts, might not the very first insect he touched, infuse death into his veins; or the first fruit he dared to eat, be his destruction? Could he create fire, and perform other offices for himself, the knowledge of which is only to be gleaned from experience,

reading, or reflection? Or, last and best of all, could he gain consolation from a source he had never known, or sought to know? Could he, in his affliction, look up to his God for direction, and be comforted? No, my children; he would grope about, as one that is blind, and, with the blessings of his Maker around him, die of utter desolation, and disquietude of soul and body. Therefore, in conclusion, my children, think no knowledge too mean to acquire, no extension of intellect too wide for your grasp; but learn from all around you, and treasure up something in your mind, even from the meanest of God's creatures. This exercise will pre-

vent your thoughts running into a channel destructive to your worldly happiness and welfare. It will keep you above low temptations, vulgar desires, and false ideas of things. Your mind will be stored with subjects for reflection ; and that wholesome exercise of the spirit, will lead you to use the creatures of God aright, see yourself as you are, and teach you how to justly value things of *this life*, and estimate all the true value of *that life* which shall be hereafter.

Then will you exclaim with the Psalmist, " O Lord, how excellent is Thy name in all the earth ! How glorious art Thou ! How worthy to be feared ! What is man that Thou

art mindful of him ; or the son of man, that Thou visitest him ? Justice and judgment are the habitation of Thy throne ; mercy and truth shall go before Thy face. Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings Thou hast ordained strength. Thou art great, and doest wondrous things ! Thou art God alone ; therefore will I praise Thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart ; and I will glorify Thy name for ever !”

Awhile, my little ones, we've stray'd
Through meadow, wood, and dale ;
Awhile we've wander'd o'er the glade,
And linger'd in the vale.
Together we have walk'd at morn,
When glory fill'd the sky ;
And once, on wings of fancy borne,
Have travell'd through the sky.

But now we part, as those who wend
New regions to explore ;
Whose paths to different objects bend,
Whose fellowship is o'er.
Some space apart, and we may meet
In other scenes to stray ;
You as a band of pilgrims sweet,
And I to lead your way.
Till then, farewell !—but with you tak
My blessing, for its giver's sake.

A CHILD'S PRAYER.

Holy Father ! Power supreme !
God of glory ! Fount of grace !
Be Thy name my constant theme,
And Thy temple nature's space.

Let me spend my term of days
In Thy worship, Lord of might ;
Ever singing songs of praise,
And rejoicing in Thy light.

L

Oh, restrain my tongue from ill,
Teach my feet from vice to flee ;
And my soul with doctrine fill,
Till my spirit's full of Thee.

In my hours of grief, or care,
Be Thine arms my couch of rest ;
Teach me all Thy frowns to bear,
And in trials think me blest.

In my sorrows, be my joy ;
In my pleasure, all my mirth ;
Let Thy power those bands destroy
Which confine my soul to earth.

Look with pity, Lord, on all
Who Thy voice neglect to hear ;
Teach them on Thy name to call,
And Thy holy word revere.

Let thy Spirit, Lord, be given
To thy creatures from above :
So shall earth be like thy Heaven,
God of glory, Lord of love !

CONCLUDING STANZAS.

My task is ended, and my labour past,
 My grains of knowledge scatter'd to the wind ;
 May some stray seed in genial soil be cast,
 Some pious truth a guileless welcome find.

Then shall my time be not in vain bestow'd,
 But richly recompensed my toil and care ;
 If one young pilgrim on life's thorny road
 Shall thank me for a flow'ret planted there ;

A blossom nurtured by the gentle dew
 Of childhood's pangless tears ; yet deck'd the
 while,
 To Fancy's eye, with Beauty's fairest hue,
 By the bright sunshine of its joyous smile.

THE END.

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